

# BMS Counseling News

Our newsletters include information about what is happening in the counseling department, about concerns and issues that are pertinent to middle school students and tips for helping your child be successful. Please take time to read our newsletter and discuss these topics with your child.



## Eating Disorders

Eating disorders are a medical/psychiatric illness recognized by the American Psychiatric Association. Eating disorders include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge eating. All three of these go beyond concerns about food, eating, appearance of beauty.

Eating disorders arise as early as elementary or middle school. Ninety five percent of eating disorders occur between the age of 12 and 25. Eating disorders can occur in both males and females. Alarmingly, eating

disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness. Also, eating disorders can have a significantly devastating impact on health. A variety of medical complications can occur including: electrolyte imbalance, amenorrhea, osteoporosis, muscle weakness, and disruption in thinking patterns. In addition, suicide is the most common cause of death for those that are anorexic, followed by sudden cardiac death.

Risk factors for eating disorders include, but are not

limited to: gender; age; weight changes; family history of eating disorders; dieting; and personality traits (e.g. low self-esteem, difficulty coping with stress, unable to deal effectively with conflict).

Treatment is imperative for eating disorders. Typically treatment is done by a team of professionals trained to handle eating disorders. Psychotherapy, nutrition counseling, family therapy and medical monitoring are a few items that may be included in a treatment plan.

## Eating Disorder Signs and Symptoms

- Dramatic weight gain or loss
- Rapid or persistent decline or increase in food intake
- Eating in secret, hiding food, disrupting family meals
- Denial of food and eating problems, despite concerns of others
- Purging; restricting; binge eating; compulsive eating; compulsive exercising; abuse of diet pills, laxatives, diuretics or emetics
- Medical complications, such as amenorrhea, low resting heart rate, unexpected osteopenia or osteoporosis, electrolyte abnormalities, low body temperature, orthostatic hypotension

## Getting Help

If you are concerned about your student please get help right away. Contact your school counselor, a doctor familiar with eating disorders or one of the resources listed below:

Water's Edge Counseling and Healing Center  
Burnsville, MN  
952-898-5020

The Emily Program  
Stillwater, MN  
651-645-5323

Melrose Institute  
Maple Grove & St. Louis Park, MN  
952-993-6200

### Counseling Recap.:

- During November and December counselors met individually with 174 students.
- Counselors had 445 student contacts in small group counseling.
- Counselors presented 4 different lessons in the classroom, covering 18 different class periods.

# Healthy Body Image

Cultivating a healthy body image can be a protective factor against eating disorders. Here are some ways to talk with your kids about body image.

- Talk about the importance of food for nutritional value, about the art of cooking and about the variety of foods.
- Try not to label foods as “good” or “bad”. This labeling can have a negative impact on relationship with food.
- Make a list of all the things our bodies do for us. Help kids appreciate parts of their body versus criticize them.
- Notice and discuss the emphasis that mass media places on looks, image and weight. Explain how ads can be airbrushed and how images that are seen are not representative of the real world.
- Keep a close eye on how you talk about your body. As hard as it may be, work on your own body image. The feelings and views you have about your body can have an impact on your child’s body image. Work to make that impact a positive one!
- Encourage your kids to exercise for the joy of movement and for overall health benefits. Don’t place too much emphasis on calories burned.
- Encourage your child to talk with you about their feelings. We hear as early as 6th grade that students eat or don’t eat when they feel upset. Teach your child to talk about emotions instead of “feeding” or “starving” them away.



We’re on the web: visit the “counseling office” tab on the BMS webpage for more information.

Counselors:

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## Counselors in the classroom

Sixth grade students at Boeckman Middle School are reading “Drums, Girls and Dangerous Pie” by Jordan Sonnenblick. In line with this book counselors visited reading classrooms to discuss the topic of grief. The goals of this lesson are to discuss normal reactions to grief, review the five stages of grief, explore coping strategies and discuss the importance of getting help from adults when necessary. At the end of this lesson 95% of 6th grade students were able to identify ways people respond to grief and 90% could identify when adult support is needed to handle grief.

Eighth grade students are beginning their small group planning seminars with our 8th grade counselor, Mrs. Gustafson. Small groups discuss basic high school vocabulary (trimester, credit,

honors classes) and begin to discuss career planning for the career areas they are interested in. Prior to the seminars only 50% of 8th graders at BMS had thought about what classes they are going to take in high school. Halfway through these seminars this percentage has increased to 95%.



### What to ask your 6th grader:

What are two reactions that people have to grief? When is it important to seek adult support to handle grief?

### What to ask your 8th grader:

Have you completed your planning seminar? If not, when is your seminar scheduled? If so, what are some of the classes you are thinking about taking in high school?